

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 035900

FOR UNDERSECRETARY SISCO

FOLLOWING REPEAT ASMARA 216 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA,  
LONDON, KHARTOUM, MOGADISCIO, NAIROBI, USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR,  
COMIDEASTFOR, NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI, NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA & DIRNSA  
DATED 17 FEBRUARY 1975:

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0216

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN SCENE

1. IN 15 FEB CONVERSATION WITH CONSOFF, MORE OR LESS RELIABLE  
SOURCE SAID KAGNEW PROVISION OF POWER TO ASMARA WOULD BE CONSIDERED  
INTERVENTION BY ELF. HE ADDED THAT IF ELECTRICITY WENT ONLY TO HOMES  
IT MAY BE ACCEPTED AS AN HUMANITARIAN GESTURE, BUT THAT UTILIZATION  
BY INDUSTRIES WOULD RESULT IN REPRISALS AGAINST KAGNEW. SOURCE  
ALSO SAID ERITREAN COMMANDO POLICE (CP), WERE BEING REPLACED  
IN ASMARA BY CP FROM ADDIS: COMMENT: THE 1ST 720-B TO ARRIVE IN  
ASMARA ON 16 FEB BROUGHT CP FROM ADDIS. THE 2ND 720B BROUGHT  
ABOUT 140 TROOPS, WHO WORE BLUE BERETS (PRESUMABLY TERRITORIALS).

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FIVE SORTIES OF TROOPS WERE SCHEDULED FOR ASMARA ON 16 FEB.

END COMMENT. SOURCE ALSO REPORTED ABOUT 300 TROOPS FROM TERRITORIAL ARMY HAD BEEN SENT TO ASMARA.

2. SOURCE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT A FUEL TANKER WAS BURNED MORNING OF 15 FEB ABOUT 40 KMS FROM MASSAWA ENROUTE TO ASMARA. TWO OTHER TANKERS IN CONVOY RETURNED TO MASSAWA. A NAVAL OFFICER REPORTS THAT THE ELF WHO ATTACKED THE TANKER WERE ALL KILLED. APPROX. 1030 HRS 16 FEB, 8 ESSO FUEL TANKERS (BELIEVED TO CONTAIN GASOLINE) WERE SEEN BEING ESCORTED THRU ASMARA BY 4 TRUCK LOADS OF SOLDIERS. IT IS ASSUMED THAT TANKERS CAME FROM MASSAWA.

3. DR. BEREKET AB HABTE SELASSIE. SOURCE REPORTS THAT DR. BEREKET AB IN NOW IN KASSALA AND PLANS TO RETURN TO US. ACCORDING TO SOURCE DR. BEREKET AB HAS TAKEN MANY PICTURES OF ERITREAN SCENE IN PAST MONTH. SOURCE'S SISTER FLED ASMARA WITH DR. BEREKET AB IN LATE DECEMBER.

4. ANOTHER SOURCE, OF UNKNOWN RELIABILITY, REPORTS THAT THE TIGREAN LIBERATION FRONT HAS BLOWN A BRIDGE NEAR ADIGRAT, TIGRE.  
( 15 15N, 39 28E).

5. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE REPORTED CONTINUED FIGHTING NW OF ASMARA IN DIRECTION OF KEREN, AND SOME EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD TO THE NORTH.  
SHERRY UNQTE INGERSOLL

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